

Shared Learning in Clinical Practice

Mental Health Practice Development Newsletter

The third “Shared Learning in Clinical Practice” symposium on the subject of Risk Assessment was held in the Hawke Building, UniSA’s City West Campus, Adelaide, on Thursday 22 March 2012. The symposium examined mental health clinical service responses in critical and crisis situations and was co-facilitated by Professor Nicholas Procter, Chair in Mental Health Nursing UniSA and Julie Murison from Eastern Adelaide Mental Health Service. A total of 128 health professionals and support workers participated in the Symposium.

The “[Shared Learning in Clinical Practice](#)” is a partnership between the UniSA Mental Health and Substance Abuse Research Group and SA Health’s “Acute Matters.” The overarching aim of the partnership is to provide a safe environment for mental health practitioners to reflect and learn from one another regarding the complexities of modern-day clinical practice; and the implications of the various reform agendas on the way clinicians provide care and treatment. A particular focus of the Symposia relates to working with people in suicidal, self-harm crisis and other forms of risk.



Planning Team and Speakers

PICKING UP THE CLINICAL PRACTICE THREADS:

[Mental Health Risk Assessment and
Management in Country General
Health Settings](#)

“Shared Learning in Clinical Practice” first began to examine the place of a Country Hospital health workforce in Risk Assessment and subsequent treatment planning following Ann McElroy’s presentation at the March 2011 Symposium. Various practice development projects around Country Health SA LHN followed, culminating in the recent launch of a new draft Foundation Procedure and associated Risk Assessment tool for use across all General Health settings in Country. Once the tool and procedure are approved, the Country Health SA Mental Health CPC Forum will take responsibility for the development and delivery of an educational toolkit to support the new resources. SA Health staff can access further details on the CHSA MH wiki collaboration portal. Other interested parties should e-mail philip.galley@health.sa.gov.au for more information on the project.

FEEDBACK AND PLANNING FOR FUTURE SYMPOSIA

The Shared Learning Planning Team has met with Mental Health Operations Director Derek Wright and the Chief Psychiatrist Dr Peter Tyllis, regarding feedback from the March Symposium and planning for future events. There is now a “green light” for two further Symposia – in Whyalla early December and Adelaide in March 2013. The theme for Whyalla will be *Therapeutic Engagement in Assessment*, broadening out the focus from Risk Assessment and including a strong emphasis on both Older Persons Mental Health and skills development in engaging with ‘challenging clients.’

The Planning Team will co-opt local mental health staff from the Whyalla region in developing the program for the December Symposium, which will be held at the Centre for Regional Engagement on the UniSA campus. There is a strong likelihood of a “live link-up” with interested clinicians in Mount Gambier and Adelaide on the day. The likely dates will be either 5 or 6 December 2012. To register your interest early, please send an e-mail to mentalhealth@unisa.edu.au.

Feedback from the March Symposium is also now being analysed with a view to the 2013 Adelaide Symposium. Details to follow.





SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FROM THE EVALUATION FORMS

Number of Participants: 128

Number of Responses: 105

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The Symposium was relevant to my role	88	17	-	-
The Symposium has made a positive contribution to my professional Development	74	31	-	-
The Symposium Program held my interest	65	37	-	-
The Symposium was of a good standard	76	28	-	-

A SELECTION OF KEY THEMES IDENTIFIED FROM THE EVALUATION FORMS

What was most beneficial to you about today's Symposium?

"It significantly lifted my confidence –reinforced that my assessment skills, management and communication skills are on track in a difficult system"

The high quality and focus of presentations was greatly appreciated and the speakers were highly respected. Also noted in this section was the relevance of topics to clinical practice, with the video Interview / panel review & discussion receiving popular support. The issues / topics covered in the Symposium that participants most nominated under this question were:

- **Clinical Evidence/Application:** Relevance; Challenges Current Practice; Reinforces Current Practice; Changes Clinical Practice; Reflect on Current Practice -
- **Range and depth of experience of presenters** – strong clinical focus
- High quality, range and diversity of presentations (evidence / research based)
- **Suicide / Suicide Ideation**
- Networking and sharing information / ideas
- **Aboriginal Mental Health, refugees, perinatal mental health**
- Panel discussions and engagement with and from the audience
- *"Effective presentations; gaining extra knowledge; understanding public service dilemmas"*
- Hope / Positive Change / Inspirational / Lifted Confidence
- *"Everything! Grateful that Self Injury was discussed and brought to people's attention and awareness"*

What is the important take home message about Risk Assessment and Risk Management that you have gleaned from today? A selection of comments which represent overall feedback themes:

- *"That there are barriers within mental health systems, but individual clinicians need to spend the time it takes to understand the client's life story."*
- *"How important it is to remain humane when dealing with clients. Engagement that is successful is very important."*
- *"The comment made by Graham Martin when talking about his four stage plan with client/family. He said use that first meeting constructively, because it may be the only chance you have to engage."*
- *"My attitude re initial assessments has been strengthened – engagement and care is so important so I may take longer than expected to complete one. Conrad's interview was excellent and validated my view."*